
The value of peer learning at BWSR Academy

On November 1-3 the annual BWSR Academy was held at Cragun's Conference Center in Brainerd, Minnesota. With 450 attendees and 63 sessions over the three day period there were plenty of opportunities for learning and networking.

The goal during each academy year is to provide high-quality training for the local government staff who maintain and improve the delivery of conservation work in Minnesota.

The BWSR Academy focuses on providing relevant, cost-effective training to our partners that can be applied directly to their work.

A key to the academy delivery model is the use of peers to provide training during sessions.

Jenny Gieseke, Organizational Effectiveness Manager for BWSR explained, "The value of peers delivering training during academy is their experience is firsthand. They are experts in their field and they're able to take that everyday experience and translate it for their audience. It adds legitimacy to the training and often creates an environment for real world problem solving."



Matt Johnson and David Demmer of BWSR present at their Wetland Conservation Act 101 session.



Tim Ruzek of Mower Soil and Water Conservation District presents during his Maximizing Media session at BWSR Academy.

The model works.

99% of attendees indicated they would attend a future BWSR Academy, while another 99% would recommend BWSR academy to others.

Feedback was positive.

One attendee noted, "I received a lot of training in varying areas for a very reasonable cost. I've seen postings for different trainings come through the office and I feel like BWSR Academy is definitely the most bang for your buck."

Tim Ruzek, Water Plan and Outreach Coordinator for Mower Soil and Water Conservation District, shared his experience, "I learned a lot from my peers at BWSR Academy whether they were presenters or audience members whom I interacted with during a session. This type of learning also awarded me the chance in my training session to share ideas and experiences with fellow SWCD and watershed district employees to use for similar conservation projects and issues."

To learn more about BWSR Academy visit our website. For more photos from the 2017 BWSR Academy visit the [BWSR Facebook Page](#) and the [2017 BWSR Academy Album](#).